



The Food Stamp News

A BEPI Publication

Winter 2003

Recognition for a Job Well Done

By Marsha Bush, Payment Accuracy Consultant



"Am I at the right place? Where do I go?"

"Who is my worker? How can I reach him/her?"

"My worker needs this today! You have to make sure my worker gets this."

These are just a few of the things that our front desk/reception staff hear on a daily basis. When customers are lost or confused, these are the individuals they go to for help. Reception staff help make the day go smoothly from your first intake appointment to that late review appointment. They have to be problem solvers, patient, and on top of agency schedules and worker whereabouts. These dedicated people are often in charge of knowing where meetings are taking place and what other types of visitors are coming to the agencies and job centers. They direct visitors to the appropriate locations with a warm smile.

Let's thank our front desk staff for everything they do. The amount of time they save the average worker is immeasurable. The next time you get the chance, please recognize the value and importance of these wonderful and patient individuals!

Training Section News

By Jenny Ritchey, Training Officer

Use the What's New section of the [BPS Registration Center](#) to identify and learn about brand new classes. When searching for courses for a specific program, click the Program column title on the results list to group topics by program area.

Upcoming Training

Watch for more information on these new classes: **Application Processing for FS** and **Immigrant/Migrant Eligibility Refresher** training.



WISDOM Data Warehouse Interactive User Training for the Food Stamps Data Mart

A 2-day training session will be provided for current or new users of the WISDOM Data Warehouse. Day one will consist of a review of the basic WebIntelligence functionality along with an introduction to the advanced features, including the editing of existing reports and creation of ad hoc reports.

Day two will focus on the data found in the new Food Stamps data mart and hands-on exercises surrounding the use of this data. After attending this course, learners will be able to create reports designed specifically for their own agency's needs and identify and properly use the data elements contained in the Food Stamps data mart.

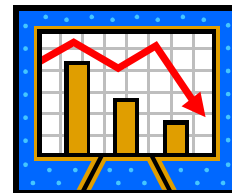
The intended audience includes supervisors, managers, or other members of agencies who are responsible for tracking food stamp data within their agency and who are currently a user of the WISDOM Data Warehouse (at the Viewer, Expanded, or Expert levels). For more information on the WISDOM Data Warehouse, go to <http://dwdworkweb/dws/wisdomweb/default.htm>.

Wisconsin Submits Final Error Rate Data for FFY 2002

By Mike McKenzie, QPE Unit Supervisor

The books are in! We have submitted the final month's data for our FSP quality control sample for the month of September 2002. This completes our submittal of data for the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2002, which runs from 10/01 to 9/02.

Our reported error rate for FFY 2002 is 12.3%. The good news is that it is down from our reported FFY 2001 rate of 12.7%. The bad news is that the national average will probably be lower than it was in FFY 2001 – probably around 8%! As you can see from the national average, we have a long way to go to reduce our FSP payment error rate, but we're moving in the right direction.



So how do we determine the error rate? A monthly random sample of cases is drawn from all active cases in the state (1,020/year). Cases are reviewed for eligibility and payment accuracy for a specific month. The ratio of issuance dollars in error to the number of dollars reviewed constitutes the state error rate. Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) pulls a sub-sample (approximately 400 cases/year) of the state sample to validate our case findings.

If a state's error rate for a given year is higher than the national average, the state is liable for a fiscal penalty. Until now, if a state was liable for a penalty, FNS has allowed the state to "reinvest" the penalty amount back into FSP improvement rather than send a payment to FNS. This allowed us to develop reinvestment plans, approved by FNS, that could most effectively increase program payment accuracy in our state.



QA is seeing more consistent use of averaging and documenting the prior 3 full months Child Support income at applications and recertifications. Our QA and PAC reviews continue to see better documentation. But, the most error prone area continues to be earned income. The most common earned income error stems from failure to get the adequate amount of verification (i.e. only using 1 check stub to calculate the income instead of all stubs from at least the last 30 days).

Federal regulations require verification of gross income at application and recertification for food stamps. Please remember to verify current income when completing an application or review. Using the check stubs received in the 30 days prior to the interview provides the most accurate estimate of prospective earned income.

Be sure to request and use all of the check stubs when calculating a prospective estimate and be aware of overtime, change in rate of pay, shift differential, or other fluctuations in your calculations. By taking a few extra minutes to make an accurate income estimate, thousands of dollars in benefit issuance errors can be saved, benefiting all of us (the State, Local Agencies, and our customers).

Special Recognition: The State would like to congratulate 3 agencies that had more than 10 cases pulled for review and have a 100% payment accuracy rate for FFY 2002. Thanks for your commitment and hard work!

Eau Claire, Sheboygan, and Waukesha

Happy ESS Day - January 27, 2003

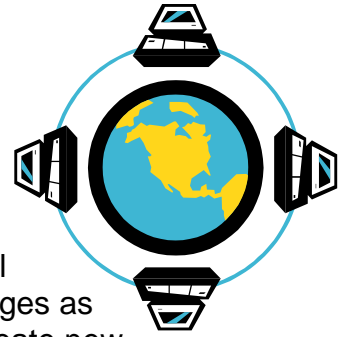
The State would like to thank each and every one of you for your hard work and dedication to food stamp payment accuracy.



Food Stamp Web Page Updates

By Dave Hippler, FSHB Writer

The Food Stamp Program and its web pages have moved to the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS). While the program moved officially on July 1, 2002, it took a few extra months to move our web pages. What does this mean to you? If you try to access old FS pages on the web, you'll notice a redirect page that will automatically take you to the new page. If you have saved any FS pages as a Favorite in Internet Explorer, you should delete the old ones and create new Favorites.



The new FS Program Summary page is found at <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/foodstamps/>. This site requires no logon ID as it is an open Internet site. It contains links to pages explaining the program, where to apply, how to spend FS, and use of the Quest Card. It also provides useful links for FS workers. The page is intended for use by workers, recipients, and advocates alike.

There is also a new Eligibility Management Home Page at <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/em/> intended for IM workers only. It provides useful links to handbooks, training, policy, the Call Center, and more. Please visit these sites and add them to your Internet Explorer Favorites.

Note: The FS Handbook is not moving and will remain on a DWD site. You will not need to update your Favorite for the FS Handbook.

New Farm Bill Bonus Options

By Lisa Hanson, Corrective Action Manager

For the past several years the federal government has sanctioned the State of Wisconsin for exceeding the national average for our statewide food stamp error rate. We would like to see this turned around, and with the new Farm Bill, we believe we will have an opportunity to earn money rather than be sanctioned.

The new Farm Bill provides an opportunity for states, in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2003, to receive performance bonuses based on performance measures. These bonuses will be based on the following four criteria:

- **Payment Accuracy** - A total of \$24 million will be divided among 7 states with the highest payment accuracy rate and 3 states with the most improved payment accuracy rate.
- **Negative Error Rate** - A total of \$6 million will be divided among 4 states with the lowest negative error rate and 2 states with the most improved negative error rate.
- **Participation Rate** - A total of \$12 million will be divided among 4 states with the highest participation rate and 4 states with the most improved participation rate.
- **Timeliness of Application Processing** - A total of \$6 million will be divided among 6 states with the highest percentage of timely processed applications.



Remember - FFY 03 began in October 2002 and runs through September 2003. Let's all work together to see that the State of Wisconsin receives performance bonus funds!

2003 BIG TEN Food Stamp Conference



By Lisa Hanson, Corrective Action Manager

Wisconsin will host the "13th Annual BIG TEN Food Stamp Program Improvement Conference" at the Milwaukee Hilton in Milwaukee, WI. Our annual statewide conference will be incorporated into this conference as well. The conference dates are set for August 20 - 22, 2003.

The conference will include attendees from all BIG TEN states, FNS staff, and staff from regional offices outside the Midwest Region. BIG TEN conferences provide a great opportunity for individuals to network and share ideas for success from other states or individual agencies.

The conference will provide many valuable workshops for food stamp payment accuracy, along with outstanding speakers to inspire and motivate you. Registrations will be sent out in early May, so mark it on your calendars.

Food Stamp Supervisor Forums Continue...

By Lisa Hanson, Corrective Action Manager

Once again the State of Wisconsin will host statewide Supervisor Forums in 2003. These forums are scheduled for March 12th in Wisconsin Dells at the Kalahari, March 18th in Hayward at the Country Inn and Suites, March 19th in Stevens Point at the Best Western, and March 26th in Waukesha at the Country Inn Hotel.

Mark your calendars! These forums will provide a great opportunity for supervisors to learn from one another on how to increase worker morale and motivation and how to develop a strategic plan for food stamp payment accuracy.

FS Handbook Tip

By Dave Hippler, FSHB Writer

Do you need to find out when a FS policy changed? The easiest way to do this is to note the section of the handbook that changed. Then go to the Green Sheets link at the top of the Handbook home page. Open the green sheets in reverse chronological order and look in the left column for the appendix section. If it's not listed, then it didn't change in that release. Open previous green sheets and repeat until you find the handbook section in question. The detailed notes on the right side of the green sheet will explain the change and the top of the green sheet will list the date of the release.

Green
Sheet
Link



Policy and CARES Update

By Sara Pynenberg, FS Policy Analyst

January 2003

Exclusion of Student Financial Aid for FS (Ops Memo 02-68)

SSI Auto-Update (Ops Memo 02-70)

Race/Ethnicity Coding Changes (Ops Memo 02-74)



February 2003

Addition of TANF services type code to ANBR will allow workers to identify the type of TANF service that confers categorical eligibility for FS.

Addition of a statement to the CAF indicating client awareness of no FS benefit increase if there is a failure to report an income decrease will eliminate most FS underissuance client errors due to client failure to report a decrease in income.

March 2003

Addition of a "loss of contact" field for FS to generate a request for client contact and loss of contact closure reason.

ANSE enhancements for student FS eligibility will allow workers to more accurately identify students who are eligible for FS.

Data Exchange Enhancements

- DXRC – new summary screen of outstanding DX matches by case.
- DXNH – new hire match will occur weekly instead of monthly.
- Alert will be generated to identify UC matches instead of a broadcast message.
- SWICA quarterly wage match criteria will be enhanced – quarterly wages will only be matched for individuals known to CARES for all 3 months in the quarter. Workers will continue to have the ability to query individual wage information for most recent wage information.
- Dispositions will no longer be created for SSWS (Social Security Number) mismatches. These will continue to be identified through an alert.

New Database for Second Party Reviews

By Lisa Hanson, Corrective Action Manager

Agencies have been using a database on the web to report second party reviews. This database is easy to use and eliminates the hassle of paper records. Agencies have voiced one disappointment, though: the inability to review reports from this database. The only way agencies could receive these reports was to request them from the State. However, this will no longer be the process with the new database.

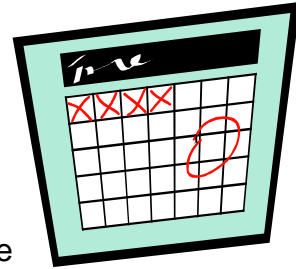
Not only will this database provide agencies with their own reports, it will provide the State the opportunity to maintain all error data within one database, rather than three separate systems. The database will include data from Quality Assurance reviews, PAC reviews, and second party reviews. Information for accessing this database has been sent through e-mail to the Food Stamp Representative within your agency. If you do not have this information and require it, please contact your FS Rep, or feel free to contact Lisa Hanson at 608-266-5483 or lisa.hanson@dwd.state.wi.us with any questions or concerns you may have.

QA Corner

By Marcia Williamson, QA Specialist-Advanced

Timely Processing of Applications

One of the new FNS requirements this fiscal year for state QA offices is to monitor issuance of food stamps within 30 days of application and whether or not expedited food stamps are being processed timely when the customer meets the requirements.



For each active case pulled QA will look at payment accuracy for the sample month and look back to see if the current certification period was based on an application. If so, QA will determine if Expedited Issuance guidelines were met. For cases not eligible for Expedited Issuance QA will determine if the benefits were approved within the 30-day processing timeline.

There will not be agency penalties attached to any errors, but Wisconsin's accuracy will determine if Wisconsin is eligible for performance bonus funding. QA will give agencies feedback on this element as well as the accuracy of the sample month benefits for each reviewed case.

Alien Codes

QA has found cases with incorrect alien codes on ANAR. The most common error is agencies coding a person as a temporary resident when s/he has been lawfully admitted for permanent residency.

If a registration card says "temporary proof of residency," that does not mean the person is a "temporary resident." Also, it's important to remember that an expiration date on the Alien Registration Receipt Card is not valid proof the person is a temporary resident or no longer eligible to remain.

The best method for obtaining status, as well as other data such as entry date and birth date, is to use the SAVE system. You can use this for customers who provide you with an Alien Registration Number.

Dial 1-800-365-7620. When prompted, enter your agency code. (If you don't know it contact your manager.) When prompted again, enter the nine digit alien number.

If you have no alien number or need additional information, send the Secondary Verification Form (federal form G845-S) to the Milwaukee office at 310 E. Knapp St., Milwaukee WI 53202.



At reviews, always ask non-citizen customers whether their citizenship status has changed. Many have become citizens since first applying, and they will not know this is information we need.

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